



CAMRA

Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Branch

Pub News

October 2009 – The Halloween edition

by Nigel Sadler - Pub Liaison Officer

The nights are starting to draw in, the mornings are getting a bit chilly. We see the lovely varying shades of golds and reds in the leaves, the ales become darker and stronger. What a wonderful season autumn is!

To start off this month I am extremely pleased to announce, for those that don't already know, **The Wheatsheaf** at Writtle was voted East Anglian Pub of the Year and now goes forward for the national title against 15 others. Once again our whole hearted congratulations to Tony and Barbara O'Boyle on this fantastic achievement. I only hope they can fit in the coachloads that will now invariably turn up to try it out, the word "snug" springs to mind!

We also have a few more award winners this month as follows:

The Woolpack in Chelmsford, run by Mags and Dave Gentry, has just one National Cask Ale Pub of the Year in the Morning Advertiser awards. Again a fantastic achievement and goes to underline how lucky we are in the area. Although not a CAMRA award it would be churlish not to recognise this and I am sure all the branch will be pleased they have won. (More good news from The Woolpack below)

Next we have our inaugural awards for Best Local Food Pub and Best Local Family Pub which went to **The White Hart**, Margaretting Tye and **The Six Bells**, Boreham, respectively.



Ting, chef at The White Hart, receiving the award on behalf of landlady Liz and the rest of the team.

John Cannon of the Six Bells gets his certificate.

Finally we are pleased to announce that Chris and Cam of **The White Horse** in Townfield Street have been awarded the branch's Most Improved Pub award known as the 'Fred Dowry' award (named after a member of the Branch who died suddenly). It will be presented on what would have been Fred's birthday - Trafalgar Day, Wednesday 21st October.

The presentation will take place at 9pm but we'll probably start gathering from 8pm so come along and give them a round of applause.

PUB NEWS

The Woolpack, Chelmsford – As from the start of October the pub will have a free pump available for guest ales outside the normal Greene King range. I am sure many of us will appreciate Dave's efforts in securing the deal with GK. Each month there will be a featured county and Dave is kicking off with Dorset and there will be 3 brews apiece on offer from Art Brew, Isle of Purbeck and Keystone Breweries during the month (only one on at any time though of course).

The Endeavour, Springfield Road – Mike and Jacqui have organised a Halloween party on Saturday 31st and the theme this year is Vicars and Tarts so get your costumes sorted now. If only I knew a few more vicars.....

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BREWERY BITS

For those of you that don't know as from the 1st September I have been over at the **Brentwood Brewing Company**, working alongside current brewer Sophie de Ronde. Oh yes not only do I look good with my clothes off (see June issue) but I can also brew beer!

I first completed the basic BrewLab course 23 years ago, when it was at The London Polytechnic and a further course this year with Dave Porter, one of the country's leading brewers and brewery installers.

(I have given my word that I won't be involved in sales as this would conflict with my current position as Pub Liaison Officer, more of which below).

For those of you that might be interested in knowing a bit more about the brewing process **The Ivory Peg** in Chelmsford has arranged a "Meet the Brewer" evening for Wednesday 7th October starting around 7.30pm and Brentwood Brewing Co will be presenting it. I will be there along with Sophie and Director Roland Kannor. Why not come along, give us a heckle and learn how beer is made. (Not sure if there will be any "Heavenly Bodies" there though!)

GBG/LOCAL RECOMMENDED PUBS SURVEYS

Branch Social Secretary Brian Debenham has arranged a number of surveys to be conducted in the coming 4 months to select the pubs we will put forward for the 2011 Good Beer Guide and those we would like to see in next year's Local Recommended Pubs booklet. We would welcome a few new faces to join us, particularly you ladies, so check out the social calendar and website for more info.

PUB REVIEW

This month's review comes from my partner Liz, who was told I would stop her housekeeping unless she wrote it! So here it is:

In the spirit of Local Pubs Week, Nigel, his daughter Helena and I went out to The Windmill Inn at Chatham Green recently for a meal. To me, The Windmill has managed to keep the essence of a British Pub where you can sit and enjoy a quiet pint, but also enjoy a family meal as well. Elaine and Peter, the landlords, are welcoming. The pub is a free house and although they have their Windmill Ale which is rebadged GK IPA it does also have 2 guest beers which this week were Farmer's Pucks Folly and Captain Ann – both excellent ales and in very good condition– was Nigel's conclusion. As I was designated driver, I couldn't comment!

The pub naturally splits into 2 halves and the restaurant area is both homely and comfortable.

The menu has a good variety but the meals are not trying to be flashy, and definitely good value for money. To wet your appetites – Nigel started with warm mackerel fillet with a horseradish mayonnaise and salad garnish and I had deep fried brie with salad. (Helena decided to forego a starter which was actually quite sensible if you have a small appetite, as the main courses were big.) She had a ¼ lb Aberdeen Angus burger with chips and garnish, Nigel went for a fillet steak with a béarnaise sauce, and mine, an enormous minted lamb suet pudding and all with plenty of vegetables.

Nigel chose a bottle of Cote du Rhone from a very respectable and reasonably priced wine list. It was of good quality and went well with our meals (I was allowed a glass to taste!).

To finish off we all had a selection of ice cream from a lovely range of flavours, something so often not on menus anymore but just right after all we had eaten before.

Overall a very nice evening in a relaxed setting with some good beer and all in all excellent value. We certainly give it 9/10.

FORTHCOMING VACANCY - NEW PUB LIAISON OFFICER REQUIRED

I shall be stepping down at the end of this year and announced this intention at the last branch meeting.

When I took on the role I said I would do it for one year and give it a 100% effort, which I like to think I have done. During the past few months I have met many licensees and managers, some of whom I now count as friends and have enjoyed many beers during that time. There are around 200 real ale outlets in the branch area and I got to visit 190 of them in the end.

It was an undefined role at the start and therefore I decided to mould/shape it as I went along. Initially I set out to promote the CAMRA LocAle scheme and encourage the sale of locally produced beers. Then after talking and getting to know more it was apparent that we, as CAMRA, could also help licensees in what has been a very tough time for the pub trade.

I have worked alongside Bryan Grimshaw on the “Recommended Pubs” booklet and launched the plaques. With much help from Tim Adams we put together the Passport Scheme for the Summer Festival. I hope that these ventures will continue next year and be even better.

Finally of course there has been this monthly newsletter – one man and his waffle - which has given publicans the chance to advertise various events free of charge to not only to our branch members but anyone visiting our website. I would also like to see this continue and develop.

So if you would like to be my replacement why not pop along to a branch meeting in the next couple of months a have a chat?

Keep your eyes open for the next issue in November!

For further news on pubs and breweries visit: www.tap-room.com
Please email me with any news/items for inclusion in future issues. (nigsad@yahoo.co.uk)